

The Wandering Young Gentlewoman; *Or, CATSKIN.*

YOU fathers and mothers, and children also,
Draw near unto me, and soon you shall know,
The sense of my ditty, and I dare to say,
The like han't been printed this many a day.

The subject which to you I am to relate,
It is of a Squire of a vast estate:

The first dear infant his wife did him bear,
It was a young daughter of beauty most fair.

He said to his wife, had this child been a boy,
'Twould have pleased me better, and increased my joy,
If the next be the same sort, I do declare,
Of what I am possessed she shall have no share.

In twelve months time after this woman, we hear,
Had another daughter of beauty most clear;
And when that he knew it was a female,
In a bitter passion he presently fell.

Saying, since this is the same sort as the first,
In my habitation she shall not be nurs'd;
Pray let her be sent into the country,
For where I am truly this child shall not be.

With tears his dear wife unto him did say,
Husband, be contented. I'll send her away.
Then to the country with speed she did her send,
For to be brought up by one who was her friend.

Altho' that her father he hated her so,
She-good education on her did bestow;
And with a gold locket and robes of the best,
This slighted young female was commonly drest.

And when unto stature this damsel was grown,
And found from him she had no love shewn;
She cry'd, before I will lie under his trown,
I am fully resolv'd to range the world round.

The Second Part.

But now mark, good people, the dream of the jest;
In what sort of manner this creature was drest:
With Catkins she made her a robe I declare,
The which for her covering she daily did wear.

Her own rich attire, and jewels beside,
Then up in a bundle by her they were ty'd.
Then to seek her fortune, she wander'd away,
And when she had travel'd a cold winter's day.

In the evening tir'd she came to a town,
When at a Knight's door she then sat her down,
For to rest herself who was tir'd before;
This noble Knight's Lady then came to the door.

Then seeing this creature in such sort of drest,
This Lady unto her these words did express:
Whence comest thou girl, and what would'st thou have
She said, a night's rest in your stable I crave.

The Lady said to her, I'll grant thy desire;
Come into the Kitchen, and stand by the fire.
Then she thanked the Lady, and went in with haste,
Where she was gazed on from the biggest to the least.

And being well warmed, her kunge being great,
They gave her a piece of good food for to eat:

Then to an out-house this creature was had,
Where she with fresh straw then made her a bed.

And when in the morning the day light she saw,
Her riches and jewels she hid in the straw,
And being very cold, she then did retire,
To go to the kitchen and stand by the fire.

The cook said, my lady hath promis'd that thee,
Shall be as a Scullion for to wait upon me;
And what say'st thou girl, art willing to abide?
With all my heart truly to him she reply'd.

To work with her needle she could very well,
And for raising of palte few could her excel,
She being so handy, the Cook's heart she did win,
And there she was call'd by the name of Catskin.

The Third Part.

The Lady had a Son both comely and tall,
Who often times used to be at a Ball,
A mile out of Town, one evening tide,
To dance at this Ball away he did ride.

Catskin said to his mother, pray madam, let me,
Go after your Son now this Ball for to see?
With that in a passion this lady she grew,
And struck her with the Ladle, and broke it in two,

And being thus served, she then got away,
And with her rich garments herself did array;
Then to this Ball she with speed did retire,
Where she danced so bravely that all did admire.

The sport being done, this young 'squire did say,
Young Lady, where do you live, tell me I pray,
Her answer to him was, Sir, that I will tell,
At the Sign of the broken Ladle I dwell.

She being very nimble, got home first 'tis said,
And with her Catskin robes she soon was array'd;
And into the kitchen again she did go,
But where she had been none of them did know;

Next night this young 'squire, himself to content,
To dance at this ball away again went:
She said, pray let me go this Ball for to view;
Then she struck her with a skimmer and broke it in two

Then out of doors she ran full of heaviness,
And with her rich garment herself soon did dress,
And to this Ball she ran away with speed;
Where to see her dancing all wonder'd indeed.

The Ball being ended, this young 'squire then
Said, where is it you live, she answer'd again,
Sir, because you ask me account I will give;
At the Sign of the broken skimmer I live;

Being dark, then she left him, and homeward did he
And with her Catskin robe was drest presently,
And into the kitchen amongst them she went;
But where she had been they were all innocent.

When the 'squire came home and found Catskin there
He was in amaze, and began for to swear,
For two nights at this Ball has been a lady,
The sweetest of beauties that ever I see.

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He was in amaze, and began for to swear,
For two nights at this Ball has been a lady,
The sweetest of beauties that ever I see.

She was the best dancer in all the whole place,
And very much like our Catskin in the Face,
Had she but been dress'd in that costly degree,
I should have sworn it had been Catskin boldly.

Next night to this Ball he did go once more,
And she asked his mother to go as before,
Who having a basin of water in her hand,
She threw it on Catskin as I understand.

Shaking her wet ears out of doors she did run,
And dressing herself, when this thing she had done,
To the Ball once more she then went her ways,
To see her fine dancing all gave her the praise.

And having concluded, this young 'squire he,
Said, from whence might you come, pray lady tell me,
Her answer was, sir, you shall soon know the same,
From the sign of the basin of water I came.

Then homeward she hurry'd as fast as could be,
This young 'squire then was resolv'd to see
Whereto she belonged, then following Catskin,
Unto an old straw house, he saw her creep in.

He said, O brave Catskin, I find it is thee,
These three nights together hath so charmed me;
Thou art the sweetest creature my eyes e'er beheld,
With joy and content my heart now is fill'd.

Thou art our cooks Scullion, but as I have life,
Grant me but thy love, and I will make thee my wife,
And you shall have maids for to be at your call,
Sir, that cannot be, I have no portion at all.

Thy beauty is a portion, my joy and my dear,
I prize it far better than a thousand a year;
And to have my Friends consent I have got a trick;
I'll go to bed, and I will feign myself sick.

There's no one shall attend me but thee I protest
So one day or another in thy rich dress,
Thou shalt be clad, and if my parents come nigh,
I'll tell them 'tis for thee that I sick do lie,

The Fourth Part.

Having thus consulted, this couple parted,
Next day this young 'squire he took to his bed,
And when his dear Parents, this thing both perceiv'd,
For fear of his death they were heartily grieved.

To tend him they sent for a Nurse speedily,
He said, none but Catskin my Nurse then shall be,
His Parents said, no son, he said but she shall,
Or else I'll have none to nurse me at all.

His Parents both wonder'd to hear him say thus,
That no one but Catskin must then be his Nurse:
So then his dear Parents their Son to consent,
Up to his chamber poor Catskin was sent.

Sweet cordials and other rich things were prepar'd
Which between this couple were equally shar'd;
And when all alone, they in each others arms,
Enjoy'd one another in love's pleasant charms.

And at length, on a time, poor Catskin, 'tis said,
In her rich attire she then was array'd;
And when that his mother the chamber drew near,
Then much like a Goddess did Catskin appear.

Which caused her to startle, and thus for to say,
What young Lady is this, Son, tell me, I pray!

He said, Why 'tis Catskin, for which sick I lie,
And except I have not her, with speed I shall die.

His mother then hasten'd to call up the Knight,
Who ran up to see this amazing great fight.

He said, Is this Catskin we held in such scorn,
I never saw a finer dame since I was born.

The old Knight said to her, I pray thee tell me,
From whence thou didst come, and of what Family;
Then who were her Parents she gave them to know,
And what was the cause of her wandering so.

The young Squire he cry'd, If you will save my life
Pray grant this young creature she may be my wife,
His Father reply'd, thy life for to save,
If you are agreed, my consent you shall have.

Next day, with great triumph and joy as we hear,
There were many coaches that came far and near,
Then much like a Goddess, dress'd in rich array,
Catskin was marry'd to the Squire that day.

For several days this great wedding did last,
Where was many a topping and gallant rich guest;
And for joy the bells rung all over the town,
And bottles of Canary roll'd merrily round.

When Catskin was marry'd, her fame for to raise,
Who saw her modest carriage all gave her the praise
Thus her charming beauty the Squire did win,
And who lives so great now as he and Catskin.

The Fifth Part.

Now in the fifth part I'll endeavour to show,
How things with her parents and sister did go,
Her mother and sister of life are bereft,
And now all alone the old Squire is left.

Who hearing his Daughter was marry'd so brave,
He said in my Noddle a fancy I have,
Dress'd like a poor man now a Journey I'll make,
And see if she on me some pity will take.

Then dress'd like a beggar he went to her gate,
Where stood his daughter, who appear'd very great,
He cry'd, noble Lady, a poor man I be,
And am now forced to crave your charity.

With a blush she asked from whence that he came,
With that he then told her, and gave her his name,
She cry'd, I am your daughter whom you slighted so,
Yet nevertheless to you some kindness I'll show.

Through mercy the Lord hath provided for me,
Pray Father come in, and sit down, then said she,
Then the best provision the house could afford,
For to make him welcome, was set on the board.

She said, you are welcome, feed hearty, I pray,
And if you are willing, with me you shall stay,
So long as you live; then he made this reply,
I only am come now thy love for to try.

Through mercy my Child, I am rich and not poor;
I have gold and silver enough now in store;
And for this love which at thy hand I have found,
For thy portion I'll give thee ten thousand pounds.

So in few days after, as we understand,
This Man he went home, and sold off his land,
And ten thousand pounds to his daughter did give,
And now altogether in love they do live.